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SIPDIS

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AND PASS TO USAID FOR ANE/ASIA/SA/B (WJOHNSON)
CINCPAC FOR PUBLIC DIPLOMACY ADVISOR, J51 (MAJ TURNER), J45
(MAJ NICHOLLS)
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SUBJECT: Media Reaction: U.S. Human Rights Report on
Bangladesh; Dhaka

Summary: Commenting on the U.S. Human Rights report on
Bangladesh, two pro-opposition newspapers urge the
government to abide law, show respect to democracy and make
an honest effort to improve the human rights situation.

U.S. Human Rights Report on Bangladesh

"U.S. Human Rights Report"

Pro-opposition Bangla language newspaper "Janakantha"
editorial comments (3/3):

Relevant people may like to see the assessment made by U.S.
on Bangladesh human rights situation in an oblique way. But
can reality be ignored? In the unipolar world, the U.S. is
not only assessing human rights situation, but also other
issues. Moreover, human rights issues are being considered
helpful in assessing democratic civilization in the present
day world. . .Against this backdrop, the U.S. has observed
that the human rights situation in Bangladesh has worsened
than before.

The country who has made this assessment is one of our major
donors. It has been making this kind of assessment always
as a routine. Questions may be raised regarding the Finance
Minister's comments that donors can only poke their noses in
economic issues, whether economy is something neutral to
politics. Will not those who give economic assistance look
into the human rights situation? Will not they review the
state political stability in the country? Only a stable
political situation can utilize economic assistance in a
best way.

It can be said on the U.S. report that the nation must be
rescued from the situation. The government must abide law,
show respect to democracy and hold a fruitful dialog with
the opposition to make the parliament effective. The
government's attitude should be fully democratic. This is
way to brighten the image of the country.

"The Human Rights situation in Bangladesh Has Worsened"
Pro-opposition Bangla language newspaper "Sangbad"
editorially comments (3/2):

The government often says that a high tide of development is
flowing all over the country. The country's human rights
situation is linked to development. How could the
government keep it secret from the outside world that the
spate of development without any improvement in the human
rights situation is nothing but empty words? Not only the
U.S. State Department report, the Amnesty International
report also depicts a pathetic picture of the situation in
Bangladesh. Still there may be some time to save the
country. The government may take an honest effort not only
to improve the human rights situation, but also to overcome
the crisis in its rule. Otherwise an ostrich like behavior
will only bring bigger disaster for the country.

Thomas